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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Jane's Space Flight Directory Remarks on the US and USSR Space Program [redacted]

1. Summary. The Jane's Space Flight Directory article on the Soviet space program correctly points out many asymmetries in the US and USSR's space programs. In particular, the USSR's exceptionally robust space launch capacity and the USSR's continuity of manned space activity as compared to US programs reflect differences that have arisen from different goals for each nation. The differences will be exacerbated by the Shuttle accident, and further compounded by our recent problems with the remaining US space launch vehicles. [redacted]

2. Discussion. The Soviet space program has, over the years, had its share of successes and failures. In the early years, with Sputnik and the first manned missions, the Soviets clearly were viewed as leaders in space exploration. [redacted]

Soviet exhilaration with their space successes ended in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The huge success of the US Apollo moon-landing program was the major reason for the shift in perception. Less well known in the West was the complete failure in the early 1970s of the Soviets' heavy-lift launch vehicle program. The loss of this vehicle, comparable to our Saturn V, was a setback for their lunar exploration program and other heavy-lift missions. [redacted]

The Soviets never gave up their goal of dominance in space, and in the mid-late 1970s and early 1980s, shifted substantial resources into space-related areas, particularly the development of new space launchers and manned space platforms. These efforts, in combination with a redirection of the US space program to emphasize the Shuttle, led to major asymmetries between the US and USSR programs. [redacted]

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The Washington Post article addresses several concerns--the USSR's manned space lead, new Soviet launch vehicles and militarization of space. They clearly do lead in manned space activity, and will keep the lead for some time. By 1990 the USSR will have three or four highly visible manned space accomplishments. They should have a modular space station, a space shuttle, a spaceplane and a large launch vehicle for an even larger space station than their present MIR should they so choose. The modularity of these components provides unusually good flexibility in space station configuration, as well as in launch vehicles. This modularity also shows the careful planning and continuity that has marked the Soviet space program for as long as we have followed it. Without continuity and steady development, they could not have created the well integrated, vigorous program they now have.

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The US leads in almost all areas of space technology, especially in reconnaissance satellite sensor technologies, which is one area where the US effort has been carefully and steadily funded because of national security needs. However, recent Soviet successes with interplanetary probes show they are making important strides in space technology and reliability.

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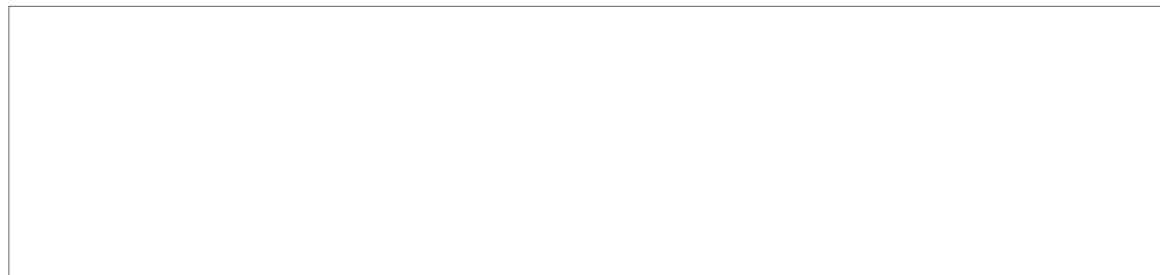
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With regard to the militarization of space, there is no question but that the Soviets will be using their newly gained capabilities for military purposes. The Soviets typically have devoted 70 percent of their launches to purely military purposes. Another 25 percent have served both civilian and military users. We do not expect these percentages to change significantly. [redacted]

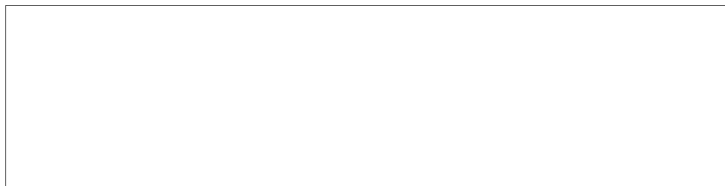
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An irony in the timing of the Soviet success is that it is surfacing just as the US encountered serious and highly publicized space launch problems. Until we resolve them, articles such as in the Jane's Space Flight Directory will become more stark in comparison rather than less. Judging from recent publicized Soviet space activity, the USSR seems intent on taking every advantage possible. [redacted]

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